



ESPALIER

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An espaliered plant is one that has been trained to grow in one plane. In the 17th Century, 'espalier' originally referred to the frame or trellis on which the plant was trained. Today, espalier refers to both the two-dimensional tree or shrub or the horticultural technique of actually training the plant.

Espaliered plants are used in today's landscape for both function and beauty. In an area where space is limited or where a plant is needed to decorate a large blank wall, the espalier is most helpful.

There are numerous espalier techniques to employ from the very simple, free flowing natural and informal designs to complicated formal patterns. Most informal espaliers do not which already has interesting or unique characteristics. Often a stunted or deformed plant is appropriate for an informal espalier.

Most espalier are trained against a solid wall. The plant should be planted 6 to 10 inches away from the wall to allow adequate room for the roots to grow, air circulation and pest control.

Any number of materials can be used as a support. If the wall is constructed of suitable material, the plant can be trained directly on the wall.

There are several hardware items which will be necessary. For masonry walls, u-bolts, eye bolts, and eye screws are helpful. They can be anchored by using expandable lead shields, or plastic plugs in the mortar joints. For wooden walls use a 2½-inch floor flange with a 6-inch galvanized nipple threaded over the end of the nipple and fasten with a wire roof clip. On the opposite end, attach a 3-inch turnbuckle so the tautness of the wire can be adjusted. There are several ways to begin an espalier. Many nurserymen already have plants in a container with a trellis. These will be about 3 to 4 feet tall in a 3-gallon container. This is the easiest way since they have already been started. All the home gardener has to do is transplant.

If you start with an unpruned plant, be sure to plant it far enough away from the base of the wall, and prune sparingly until the plant becomes established, then regular pruning and training can be accomplished. Most of the major pruning should be done while the plant is dormant, or if it is a flowering plant, be sure to prune in the appropriate season. Remember that pruning does stimulate more growth. The limbs are most flexible during the summer. One can bend and train them to supports as the season progresses.

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